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5. Local political groups in Trieste clamor for elections (page 6).

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## FAR EAST

1. French forces in Tonkin are severely pressed:

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[Redacted]

The US Military Attaché at Hanoi states it is "very doubtful" that the military picture in Tonkin is as promising as the French publicly assert. The Viet Minh strategy of constant attacks against new points on the defense perimeter is tiring French troops by forcing them to make continual countermoves. The French are losing experienced and well-armed soldiers, while the Viet Minh is holding its best troops in reserve and committing only ill-equipped, untrained conscripts.

The attache concludes that the "best French hope" at the moment is for the Viet Minh soon to cease general operations in order to recuperate and supply.

Comment: An American official, just returned from the southern delta region within the defense perimeter, reports that the entire area is being infiltrated by Viet Minh forces, with only four towns securely held by the French. Announcements over the past weekend by the French that they are conducting an offensive in that area appear therefore to be misleading; actually, the operation has more the complexion of a defensive action involving troops badly needed elsewhere.

2. Karens may abandon demand for separate state in Burma:

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[Redacted]

A spokesman for the Karen Congress, an organization composed of Karens in legal opposition to the Burmese Government, reportedly stated that the insurgent Karens will not insist upon the establishment of a separate state. They will, however,

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demand that Karen who have been imprisoned or discharged from military or civil positions for political reasons be released or reinstated, and that Karen be guaranteed minority rights throughout Burma, including the right to their own educational system and equal commercial opportunities with Burmans.

Comment: The Karen Congress has been in constant touch with the insurgent Karen and it is plausible that this group would be utilized as an intermediary to transmit any offer by the insurgents to the government.

This report, if true, represents a considerable concession on the part of the Karen who have heretofore been intransigent in their demand for a separate state. Moreover, the reported concession is being offered at a time when the Burmese Communists have been holding out to the Karen the promise of such a state.

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## EASTERN EUROPE

### 5. Local political groups in Trieste clamor for elections:

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All parties favoring an independent Trieste, including the Cominformists and the pro-Tito groups, are clamoring for communal elections in Trieste, according to the American

Political Adviser. He states that pro-Italian groups are voicing no objections to an election, and that consequently there seems to be no legitimate local basis for the Allied Military Government to persist in its refusal to set an election date.

Comment: Last October the Military Government postponed communal elections until 1952 at the request of the Italian Government, in order to provide a proper atmosphere for possible Yugoslav-Italian negotiations on the Trieste issue. In the absence of any firm prospect for an early Yugoslav-Italian accord, the Military Government has no justification for further postponement.

With Italian national and local elections impending, the Italian Government is particularly anxious to avoid risking further weakening of its position by a poor showing of the Italian parties in Trieste.